

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	09/03/2011
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	09/11/2010
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care for two young people, of either sex, between the ages of 10 and 17 years with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company. The home is located in a residential area that has easy access to local facilities and public transport.

The house consists of a lounge, kitchen/diner, and conservatory on the ground floor. Each young person has their own bedroom with an adjacent bathroom on the first floor, where there is also a staff office and sleeping-in on-call bedroom. There is a front and rear garden.

Both young people were present for part of this visit and made a contribution to the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. This is a good service with outstanding features. Staff work well as a team to care for young people with complex needs requiring a variety of interagency liaison. The service provides a structured and enabling environment for young people and behaviour is well managed. There are clear boundaries, consistent reward and celebration for improved behaviour. Staff are dedicated and proactive in supporting young people in education and developing opportunities for young people to achieve, develop language and make important cultural and independent living transitions. Outstanding strengths of the service are the homely and exceptionally well maintained physical environment and the effective monitoring of the home by the manager.

There are three actions made as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations set at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Arrangements to promote and maintain young people's health and medical needs are well-organised. Staff have a clear commitment to identifying the medical backgrounds of young people and accessing relevant health agencies to support them. Staff have a good understanding, including relevant training, of the health issues relating to young people, including sexual health, safer drug use and leading healthier lifestyles. Staff maintain a good working relationship with the looked after children's nurse and young people are encouraged to explore and take more responsibility for their own health care needs and arrangements.

Health care plans are well-recorded and show that young people's medical appointments are arranged. Their health is closely monitored and young people are given appropriate encouragement and support to attend appointments to meet their medical needs. Staff have a good knowledge of the medication procedures which are well organised and effectively implemented to ensure young people benefit from safe practices. All staff are trained in first aid.

There are concerted efforts to promote healthy eating and respond to young people's cultural needs. This includes meeting with young people to discuss menus, translating menus and recipes into appropriate languages and displaying healthy eating information in the home. Additionally young people are included in shopping and some appropriate food to meet religious needs is purchased. However, the actual content of the weekly menu is poor, including a dependency on convenience type foods and there are no culturally specific meals for the young people living at the home. The young people acknowledge that they are able to discuss and choose the menus but staff are not able to cook the cultural foods they are used to and like. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals and are encouraged to develop independence life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are protected by effectively managed procedures and practices for promoting their welfare and safety. There is a robust staff recruitment and selection process and all staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures. Written guidance regarding the local authority's child protection procedures is available in the home and the manager maintains effective relationships with the local safeguarding children team. Staff are fully aware of the procedures regarding young people going missing and who to notify about serious incidents in the home. The manager and staff maintain good liaison with a variety of safeguarding and public protection agencies in order to promote the safety and welfare of the young people and the community.

Young people's behaviour is well managed and significantly improved with clear

written behaviour management policies, procedures and placement care planning. Young people's welfare is protected and supported by staff who promote and implement effective risk and behaviour management strategies in their day-to-day practice. There are clear boundaries and an emphasis on promoting incentives and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Young people are proud of the rewards and incentives that they receive for their efforts and achievements. They are clear about what happens when their behaviour does not go so well, saying they do not receive an education bonus or paid activities in the evenings if they do not attend school. Records are maintained and show good accountability for when sanctions are used and also demonstrate that physical intervention has not been used in the home for an extensive period of time.

The privacy of young people is respected and they enjoy their own private space. Young people's views are valued. Information has been appropriately translated into understandable languages so young people understand and can be protected by a clear written complaints procedure in the young people's guide. There is an anti-bullying policy and young people say they have no concerns about bullying. The manager and staff show a good level of commitment to listening to young people and ensuring their concerns are taken seriously. Young people have been supported in reporting concerns to the police and to use advocacy agencies to ensure their rights are protected.

The physical environment is well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked, monitored and young people know what to do if there is a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are given opportunities to develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and achievements. They are supported by staff who present a clear and enthusiastic commitment to exploring each young person's individuality and potential to achieve. Appropriate support is afforded to each young person because staff are proactive in assessing and identifying the needs of the young people. Staff are sensitive and able to respond to a complexity of need, including racial identity, language and culture and are required to liaise with a variety of outside agencies. Staff provide individual support to young people in one-to-one key working sessions and are good at liaising with and engaging young people with these appropriate agencies. They also look within their own organisation to attempt to give young people opportunities to achieve and develop when other necessary restrictions are in place.

Young people are supported to develop their education with a variety of plans and use of resources. All young people have a personal education plan and weekly education programmes are individually developed. The manager and staff are proactive in seeking out resources and liaising with the local education authority. Some young people have a placement in local mainstream schools and colleges.

Where this is not possible young people are meaningfully engaged with an education tutor provided by the home and involved in activities that enable them to develop language, achieve new learning and work towards personal achievements. Young people are also involved in a variety of leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are looked after by staff who demonstrate a good commitment to understanding and meeting the young people's needs. Young people know about their placement care plans which record the practical day-to-day care strategies that are in place to ensure they are safe and their welfare promoted. Consultation with and inclusion of young people in their placements relies on access to interpretation and translation and staff are consistent in their approach to ensure all young people have this in place. Young people are enabled to understand, discuss and sign their care plans and attend meetings about their placements. There are regular statutory reviews and young people are actively encouraged to contribute and have their say about the progress they are making. Young people are able to influence the way the home is run with regular weekly young people's meetings.

Young people are able to move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner. There are clear procedures to ensure young people receive good information about the home, this includes translation of the young people's guide into appropriate languages and staff practically explaining and showing young people around the home and explaining the expectations when living there. Staff and young people have meaningful discussions about young people's plans for the future and leaving the home. Staff are knowledgeable about the procedures and agencies involved in the placements of the young people currently living at the home and the requirements that need to be in place for planning to move on.

Staff are very sensitive about the young people's family backgrounds and their reasons for being looked after at the home. All young people are given opportunities to look at how they may be able to make contact with their families and maintain appropriate links with significant others. Staff maintain good clear records about the levels of contact that have been directed and agreed by the social worker and the local authority.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are proactively supported to develop the skills and knowledge to help them with their transition to adulthood. There is an established independence preparation package available in the home and staff focus on each young person's individual needs and situation. Young people are supported in a variety of ways to achieve their clear vision about living independently. Young people receive both practical and emotional support to help them with their transition across cultures and

also to young adulthood. They are encouraged to develop their abilities including cooking, domestic skills, developing good relationships and trying out new opportunities in the community.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The home is furnished, decorated and maintained to an excellent standard. Young people are involved in making sure the home stays nice and choosing the décor and furnishings which give the environment such a homely feel.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are looked after in a service that is excellently monitored and managed to promote their needs, safety and welfare. Young people are helped to understand how the home is run as the young people's guide is translated into appropriate languages. Although the home's Statement of Purpose is generally up to date it does not include information about the close circuit television (CCTV) surveillance equipment that is used outside the house.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff have a strong commitment to understanding the different needs and backgrounds of young people. Discussion and records show that understanding and tolerance of difference is promoted and discriminatory behaviour and bullying is challenged and addressed. With the exception of a shortfall in meals served in the home, young people are supported by a staff team that provides a clear commitment and environment of care to meet the needs of all young people currently living at the home.

Young people are supported by experienced and well trained staff. There is a comprehensive training programme, regular refresher training and consistent staff supervision. All care staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Young people receive consistent care due to the effective staff communication including daily briefings, regular staff meetings and well maintained recording systems. Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well organised and shows a clear record of each young person's progress.

The internal monitoring of the running of the service is an outstanding feature in the organisation of this home. The monthly checks by the manager and a positive focus on continuous development leads to improvement in staff performance and therefore the quality of care to the young people. The service is also monitored through independent Regulation 33 visits.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
1	ensure the home's written Statement of Purpose includes all the matters listed in Schedule 1. This is with particular reference to the electronic means of surveillance of children which is used on the outside of the house (Regulation 4.1 - Schedule 1.19)	18/04/2011
10	ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided with food which is wholesome and nutritious and suitable for their needs and meets their reasonable preferences (Regulation 13.1 (ii) and (iii))	18/04/2011
10	ensure that any special dietary need of a child accommodated in the home, which is due to his health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background is met. (Regulation 13.2)	18/04/2011